



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC APPROVES AGREEMENT WHICH WILL SEND APPROXIMATELY \$50,000 TO STATE SCHOOL FUND

Jefferson City (December 9, 2003)---Approximately \$50,800 will be paid to the Missouri Public School Fund under an agreement reached by parties in a complaint case filed against Spectra Communications Group, LLC d/b/a CenturyTel. The complaint involved allegations that the telephone company charged late fees to customers in error.

On January 19, 2002, a CenturyTel customer filed a complaint with the Commission against CenturyTel disputing late charges which had been assessed on the billing statement prior to the past due day. The dispute involved a \$1.20 late fee assessed on four bill statements as well as the fact that the bill was considered past due before it was delinquent. When CenturyTel was made aware of the complaint, a credit of \$4.80 was issued for the late payment fees which had been billed inaccurately as well as a \$25.00 credit to compensate the customer for any inconvenience.

Further investigation into this matter by the Public Service Commission Staff and CenturyTel revealed that the telephone company had a computer programming error which resulted in 83,670 customers being charged late fees in error. CenturyTel corrected the error and began issuing refunds in October 2002. Approximately \$322,042 has been refunded to 68,937 affected CenturyTel customers.

According to the agreement filed with the Commission, CenturyTel has been unable to locate the remaining 14,733 customers owed refunds. CenturyTel states that many of those customers are no longer active customers and there is inadequate information to locate the proper refund recipients.

Because of an inability to make refunds to these customers, CenturyTel, the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission and the Office of the Public Counsel reached an agreement which states CenturyTel will pay the unrefunded overpayment balance of \$46,768 to the Public School Fund. In addition, interest owed (approximately \$4,033) on the outstanding balance will also be paid to the Public School Fund.

The Commission's order approving the agreement states: "The Commission has reviewed the Unanimous Stipulation and Agreement and the other filings by the parties. The Commission finds that the terms of the agreement are reasonable and should be approved."

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